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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FIFTEEN INDIVIDUALS CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF
3,500 POUNDS OF FRESH-CUT MARIJUANA**

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that fourteen Fresno residents and one resident of Bakersfield were charged by a federal grand jury with conspiring to manufacture marijuana and possessing marijuana with intent to distribute: YORN YIM, 20, KOEUN SAN, 31, NAVY RIEL, 37, TOUCH SAN, 37, HORT NUON, 46, SAROM SAO, 50, KOET DYSOM, 48, PHOUNGEUN NICK KEOMANISAI, 35, SOTHORN CHINO DAMLONG, 34, THEARITH PRAK, 24, YORN DORN, 49, PHORN SAN, 33, SAMNEUK BUNMA, 33, and SAVATH PRAK, 34 of Fresno and PHAT SAM, 37, of Bakersfield. PHAT SAM was also charged with possessing a firearm in connection with a drug trafficking offense.

The case was investigated by the California Highway Patrol, the Stanislaus Drug Enforcement Agency, the Central Valley California High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force, and United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

According to court documents, the 15 individuals were driving in tandem in three separate vehicles southbound on Highway 99 when they came to the attention of the California Highway Patrol just south of Modesto. A search revealed that one of the vehicles, a U-Haul truck contained approximately 3,500 pounds of fresh-cut marijuana. The majority of the 15 defendants were wearing camouflage clothing, had green-stained hands and clothing, and smelled of marijuana. A firearm registered to PHAT SAM was found in the vehicle in which he was an occupant.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Kathleen A. Servatius, who is prosecuting the case, the defendants face a mandatory ten-year term of imprisonment and a maximum of life, and a fine of up to \$4,000,000 for each drug charge. For the gun charge, PHAT SAM is facing a mandatory consecutive term of five years and a \$250,000 fine.

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